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ABSTRACT

A pilot study was made to: (1) examine the relationship of the Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory to selected variables, and (2) measure the change of attitudes of elementary education majors after one year of teaching. The MTAI was given in the senior year to a group of elementary education majors and again to the same group at the end of their first year of teaching. Changed attitudes and the direction of the reverse were noted. Other factors examined included age of participants and the type of instruction pattern of school in which the person was employed. Data from the second administration of the test revealed that the attitudes of the sample had not changed on five of the 150 statements. It appeared that those who received the largest test score gains on the second administration had been employed in schools using nongraded, individualized and/or innovative teaching methods. Age was not a determining factor. (DB)

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Beginning Teachers' Attitudes
And Their Relationship to Selected Variables

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A teacher's attitudes are assumed to be the result of his life experiences and in turn these attitudes will have a noticeable effect on the type of relationships which the teacher creates in the classroom. The problem arises how can these interpersonal relations in the classroom be predicted.

The Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory (MTAI) is designed to measure those attitudes of a teacher which predict how well he will get along with pupils in interpersonal relationships, and indirectly how satisfied he will be with teaching as a vocation. According to the designers of the instrument, the MTAI may be used in the selection of students for teacher preparation and for the selection of teachers for teaching positions.¹

This study was (1) to examine the relationship of the Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory to selected variables and (2) to measure the change of attitudes of elementary education majors after one year of teaching.

The MTAI was given in the senior year to a group of elementary education majors in a large metropolitan city in North Carolina.

¹ Cook, Walter W., Carroll H. Leeds and Robert Callis, Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory. New York: The Psychological Corporation, C 1951.

The second administration of the MTAI was given to this same group at the end of their first year of teaching. Changed attitudes and the direction of reverse were noted. Other factors examined included age of participants and the type of instruction pattern of school in which the person was employed.

Data from the first administration of the MTAI and scores from the National Test Exam (NTE) were examined. Correlation between the test score on the MTAI and the total test score on the NTE was found to be .505. This was significant at the .05 level. Correlation between the test score on the MTAI and the area exam (elementary education) of the NTE was determined to be .350.

Data from the second administration of the MTAI revealed that the attitudes of the sample had not changed on five of the one-hundred-fifty statements. Those attitudes that were determined to remain constant are as follows:

- Statement 38: The majority of children take their responsibilities seriously. (A)
- Statement 84: A teacher should not tolerate use of slang expressions by his pupils. (D)
- Statement 102: Whispering should not be tolerated. (D)
- Statement 121: It isn't practicable to base school work upon children's interests. (D)
- Statement 128: Children are not mature enough to make their own decisions. (D)

The statements receiving the highest frequency of change and the direction of change of attitude are as follows:

- Statement 3: Minor disciplinary situations should sometimes be turned into jokes. (D to A)
- Statement 26: The teacher is usually to blame when pupils fail to follow directions. (A or U-D)

- Statement 35: Discipline in the modern school is not as strict as it should be.
(U or D to A)
- Statement 36: Most pupils lack productive imagination.
(SD to D or A)
- Statement 108: "Lack of application" is probably one of the most frequent causes for failure.
(D or U to A)
- Statement 138: The child who stutters should be given the opportunity to recite oftener.
(From A or U to D)

Other observations include a mean loss in test scores on second administration of MTAI closer to Day's findings than the test author's results.² It also appeared that the individuals which received the largest gains on test scores on the second administration of the MTAI had been employed in schools using non-graded, individualized and/or innovative teaching methods. The type of instruction pattern for the individual schools was determined in a survey of the participants in the study. Age of participant did not appear to be a determining factor.

This pilot study was conducted as a basis for a future investigation on a larger scale. The main purposes were to explore certain aspects of the MTAI instrument and its relationship to other variables. The small sample size limits generalizations from being presented but does raise possible questions and areas for further consideration and study.

²H.P. Day, "Attitude Change of Teachers After Initial Teaching Experience," Journal of Teacher Education, Vol.10:326-8, Sept. 1959.